Qari

FATH MUHAMMAD PANIPATI

A brief biography

by Saaima Yacoob

بِسۡمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī:

A Brief Biography

By Saaima Yacoob

First Print 2022

Recite With Love

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Dedicated to my grandfather's brother, Akhtar Hamid Khan, who embodied the quality of zuhd, and never kept in his possession more than what he needed, whether it was a sweater or a pair of socks. A man with large round eyes and a boisterous laugh, he lived a life of service to those who needed him. It is through him that I learned the stories of the Sufis in our family, and that my dreams could possibly have a meaning. A writer and a poet, he never married. May Allah count this book as a ṣadaqah jāriyah for him, elevate his ranks with Him, and make his grave like one of the gardens of jannah. Āmīn.

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Introduction

All praise is due to Allah, the Ever-Living, our Creator, who granted us the blessing of *imān*, and made us from the *ummah* of His beloved Prophet ﷺ. May Allah's peace and blessings be upon the Beloved of Allah ﷺ, his family, his companions, and all those who follow him.

This short work before you, *Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī: A Brief Biography*, was born from a desire to share the deep love I have for this great Shaykh al-Qurrāʾ. We live in a time when people are more likely to read short bits of information on social media than an entire book. Understanding that this is the reality in which we live, I thought that perhaps the best way to share beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib's life was to share it in bits and pieces on social media. However, while I wrote the pieces to share, I also compiled them in this short work. The objective being that this makes the information shared citable for those who may want to use parts of this work in their own writings but may not have access to the source text. It can also be assigned to students if a teacher wishes to introduce his/her students to this great scholar's life and works.

I relied entirely on the book *Tadhkirat al-Shaykhayn* for the biographical details of Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's ﵀ life. *Tadhkirat al-Shaykhayn* is a compilation of essays written by those who personally knew Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ and Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh ﵀. On the last page of the first volume of this book, there is a copy of Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh's ﵀ *sanad* from Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀. While looking at this *sanad* closely, I was intrigued by the fact that the names I saw within it were very different than the ones I see in my *sanad* from my teacher Mufti Mohamed-Umer Esmail ﵀. Unlike the *asānīd* of South Asia that move through Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Makkī ﵀, the Pānīpatī *sanad* connects with the *asānīd* of the Arab world at a much later time. Curious to see who these amazing people were, I have also included the biographies of as many of these *qurrāʾ* as I could find till the Indian *sanad* meets the Egyptian one. I pray that Allah makes it of benefit. *Āmīn.*

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my mother, Sanober Yacoob, who instilled in us a love for the *walis* of Allah from a young age. As we faced various challenges in our life, she would connect our own difficulties with the life of the Beloved of Allah ﷺ as well as his ﷺ companions ﵃, and the saints

and scholars of the past to help us put our experience into perspective. Even while writing this work, I read many of these sections out loud to my mother from the Urdu books that I referenced, and she listened with just as much excitement as I felt as I read them to her. May Allah continue to keep us under her loving shade, and may Allah grant her *jannat al-firdaws* without *ḥisāb*. *Āmīn.* I also find myself grateful to someone who is very dear to me, and who I consider an elder, Fozia Khan, for taking the time to provide me with the cultural context I needed to express certain details of Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's ﵀ life accurately. May Allah reward her and her family with the best in this life and the next. *Āmīn*. Lastly, but certainly not least, I am ever grateful to my beloved husband, Mohamed Bashir, who has patiently listened to the stories and details of the lives of the *qurrāʾ* that you find here. May Allah reward him with every *khair* in this world and the next and allow us to continue to walk together towards Him ﷻ for the remainder of our lives. *Āmīn*. May Allah accept this work from us both. *Āmīn.*

Saaima Yacoob
10th Shaʿbān, 1443/13th March, 2022.

His Early Life

Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani (May Allah protect and preserve him) has written that Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī was a living miracle of the Qurʾān.

While this is obvious when one reads his scholarship, it became even more obvious as I read about his early life and found myself in tears.

Beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ was born on the 31st of January, 1904 in Panipat which is now in the state of Haryana, India into a family that lived in difficult financial circumstances. His father, Muḥammad Ismāʿīl, had no consistent source of income and was a day laborer.

When Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad was a year and a half old, he gradually became completely blind after having had chicken pox. It was only a few years later that beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib[1] ﵀ became an orphan at the age of six. Three years later, he lost his mother as well. Despite these difficulties, all those who describe him describe him as being extremely affectionate.

[1] *Ṣāḥib* is a title used to show respect in Urdu. It will be used throughout this work. Its feminine form is *Ṣāḥibah*.

When he was a child, millet was the grain that was most often cooked in his home. His biographer writes that this was the cheapest food at the time.

We ask Allah to bless Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ with the food of *jannat al-firdaus. Āmīn*

His Early Qurʾānic Education

Beloved Qārī Fatḥ Pānīpatī ﵀ started his Qurʾānic education under Miān Sharf al-Dīn Ṣāḥib. He started reading the Qurʾān, however, under a female teacher named Amatullāh. It was with Ustāni[2] Ṣāḥibah Amatullāh ﵀ that Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad studied a primer for Qurʾān reading and spelled out seven *ajzāʾ* of the Qurʾān. This means that he said each word in these *ajzāʾ* by saying each letter, the vowel on the letter, etc.[3] He also memorized twenty-seven *ajzāʾ* under respected Ustānī Ṣāḥibah. However, as he could not memorize by himself due to being blind, another student used to help him memorize his lesson. This student left Ustānī Amatullāh's school and moved to Madrasah

[2] This word means female teacher in Urdu.

[3] For a child that could not read looking into the Qurʾān due to his blindness, this exercise taught him the way in which words in Arabic are structured. This way, he did not just memorize by mimicking the sounds of words which can often result in many memorization mistakes, but rather understood which letters and vowels each word is comprised of. Later, this would also benefit him in his studies of the Arabic language. This is my own reflection as to why his respected teacher made him undergo this exercise despite his disability.

Ashrafiyyah that was founded by Qārī Sher Muḥammad ﷺ. So, Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ had to move to Madrasah Ashrafiyyah as well.

There he completed the remaining three *ajzāʾ* of the Qurʾān at the age of 11, and then did a full review of the Qurʾān with Tajwīd, and also learned some *riwāyāt* of the seven Qirāʾāt from his teacher Qārī Sher Muḥammad ﷺ. At the age of 12 or 13, he began teaching at Madrasah Ashrafiyyah under the supervision of his teacher, and it was at this institution where he would meet his great student, Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh Pānīpatī ﷺ.[4]

Ustānī Amatullāh ﷺ lived to be 90 years old and passed away in Panipat, India.

May Allah reward Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ and all of Qārī Ṣāḥib's teachers and his little classmate. *Āmīn.* It just shows us that we never know who the person we are investing in is in the eyes of Allah. What a reward Allah must have in store for them! May Allah allow us to witness it in *jannah*. *Āmīn*.

[4] A biography of Qārī Raḥīm Bakhsh can be found in *Before You Pause: How the Canonical Recitations of the Qurʾān Affect Where Waqf is Made* by Saaima Yacoob.

What His Teacher Saw in Him

Beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad Ṣāḥib ﵀ met Qārī Sher Muḥammad ﵀ when he was younger than 11 years old. His teacher, who would come to love him very much, said that I can only imagine that people must think that this blind child is extremely disabled, but what they do not know is the high status and place to which Allah will raise this child, and the heights and glory Allah will grant him.

When calling him, his teacher would affectionately say, "*Aray* Fatḥ Muḥammad" or "Miān Fatḥ Muḥammad." It is hard to translate these as the words themselves do not translate, but rather culturally, it suggests an affection and comfort that his teacher had with him. Before Qārī Sher Muḥammad ﵀ passed, he had told everyone that Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ would be his successor. For this reason, people used to call him "Khalīfa jī."

The eyes of those who are beloved to Allah (the *awliyāʾ*) see many things that others don't. Allah placed Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ in the care of His beloved servant, *Alḥamdulillāh.*

May Allah grant both him and his teacher the highest level of *jannah. Āmīn.*

The Making of a Scholar

Hazrat Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ began his Darse Nizāmī at Madrasah ʿArabiyyah Gunbdān in Panipat. There he studied the introductory books of Arabic language and Persian and the *Hidāyah* and *Tafsīr Jalālayn* with Mufti ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ﵀. He studied the remaining books of Darse Nizāmī with Mawlāna Aḥmad Allāh ʿUthmānī ﵀.

He also studied Tajwīd and Qirāʾāt with Shaykh Muḥyī al-Islam and was 24 years old when he received *ijāzah* and *sanad* from him in the seven Qirāʾāt.[5] He studied the ten *qirāʾāt* from Shaykh Muḥyī al-Islam from both *al-Shāṭibiyyah* and *al-Durrah* and *Ṭayyibah*.[6] At the age of 32, he received *ijāzah* and *sanad* for blessing (*tabarrukan*) from Qārī Ḥifẓ al-Raḥmān ﵀, a student of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Makkī ﵀, in the ten Qirāʾāt.

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[5] This is as it has been expressed in *Tadhkirat al-Shaykhayn*, 1:60. Shaykh al-Barmāwī writes that Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad also had *ijāzah* and *sanad* from Qārī Sher Muḥammad, while *Tadhkirat al-Shaykhayn* suggests that he only recited some of the *riwāyāt* to Qārī Sher Muḥammad.

[6] al-Barmāwī, *Imtāʿ al-Fuḍalāʾ bi-Tarājim al-Qurrāʾ*, 1:241.

After completing his studies in Panipat, he traveled to Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband from where he graduated at the age of 25 having studied multiple books of ḥadīth with illustrious scholars.

His teacher of Qirāʾāt, Shaykh Muḥyī al-Islam ﵀, once told someone that "He (Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad) has recited the whole Qurʾān to me and has studied the Qirāʾāt with me letter by letter, and now he has surpassed me."

Starting from when he completed his memorization of the Qurʾān to when he graduated from Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, Qārī Fatḥ Pānīpatī ﵀ underwent 14 years of training in the Islamic sciences. The depth of his understanding of various issues and the breadth of his research are therefore not surprising.

May Allah reward our beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﵀ immensely for his strength and perseverance in pursuing sacred knowledge. *Āmīn.*

Telling the Time

I had come across a foreword in *Tuḥfat al-Marḍiyyah*[7] that beloved Qārī Fatḥ Pānīpatī ﵀ had dictated. When I had first read it, I wondered why Hazrat Qārī Ṣāḥib ﵀ also dictated the exact time of the day when he had dictated the foreword, 12:20 p.m.

I seem to have found an answer in his biography. Beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﵀ had a special watch for the blind which he would use to tell the time. The biographer writes that he was fond of such watches, and he would have a special pocket made in his waistcoat for his special watch and would have a glass put on the outside of the pocket so that a person who was looking towards him could see the time on his watch through the pocket glass.

He himself would have had to remove the watch from his pocket, open its glass cover and feel the raised numbers and needles of his special watch with his blessed fingers to tell the time.

The biographer does not give any particular reason for Qārī Ṣāḥib's inclination towards his watch.

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[7] A commentary on the *Jazariyyah* by Mawlāna ʿĀshiq Ilāhī Bulandshehrī.

However, upon reflecting on it, I think it may be that as a blind person, beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib was unable to know whether it was day or night. The only way that he could keep pace with the time of day was by keeping track of the time throughout his day. And Allah knows best.

The Strength of His Memory

Hazrat Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ had been blessed with an extremely strong memory. Not only did he have 3,789 lines of poetic text memorized which included poems like *Ṭayyibat al-Nashr*, and the *Shāṭibiyyah* etc., but his memorization of the Qurʾān was also extremely strong. He could recite from anywhere in the Qurʾān at any time in any *riwāyah*. An example that his biographer gives is that once he recited the last word of every *āyah* in sequence from the beginning of the Qurʾān to the end in order to check if he had the verse endings memorized correctly according to the Ḥafṣ *muṣḥaf*.

His scribe, ʿAbd al-Qādir, shared that sometimes, while dictating a letter to him, Hazrat Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ would fall asleep for a little while. When he would awaken, he would begin dictating the letter to him from exactly where he left off, and there would be no disruption in the way the letter was worded. Similarly, sometimes, he would fall asleep while reciting the Qurʾān. Upon waking, he would resume recitation from where he left off as if he had not slept at all.

He also had a very strong sense of touch. He would remember a person just by shaking their hand, even if he had not met that person for thirty years. In a particular case that was narrated, he also remembered that he had heard that person's recitation.

His students and friends tested him many times, and every time, he was able to distinguish between who was reciting to him from memory and who was reciting to him from looking at the *muṣḥaf*. Only Allah knows how he knew that, as he could not see them at all.

He was a man whom Allah had blessed with many miracles. His memory seemed to have been one of them.

Scholars Praised His Recitation

When Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ recited in front of Hazrat Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ, he was very pleased with his recitation and praised it. He remarked that first he just listened, but then he looked towards Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ as well and did not see any changes in his blessed face. I asked my teacher, Qārī Najm al-Ṣabīh Thānwī, about this, and he explained that any kind of odd movements of the lips or signs of overexertion used to be considered mistakes. Hazrat Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﷺ was remarking that he did not see any such changes on Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's face.

Mufti Shafi Usmani ﷺ once remarked that Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's pronunciation of letters sounds as if each letter had been fit into a mold, meaning his *makhārij* and *ṣifāt* were consistently precise.

My favorite is a praise that he received from a Syrian scholar. Mullā Ramaḍān al-Shāmī heard Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's recitation at an event where many reciters of the Qurʾān had gathered and were reciting one by one. Upon hearing beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib's ﷺ recitation, he exclaimed, "يا فتح محمد أنت فاتح القراء." "O Fatḥ Muḥammad, you are victorious over all the

Qurʾān reciters." He specifically praised his pronunciation of ض, saying that he had always wondered how it is distinguished from ظ. He said that he could clearly hear the difference between the two when Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ recited it. He said this because South Asian *qurrāʾ* generally recite ض as a sound that is more similar to ظ.

Upon hearing this, beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ responded saying that ض was the only letter that he had yet to master completely.

Lastly, when beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ applied for a resident visa (*iqāmah*) to Saudia Arabia so that he could spend his old age in the city of the Prophet ﷺ, Shaykh Bin Bāz, who lived in Madinah at the time, flew to Riyadh himself to petition the King on Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's ﷺ behalf.

He was recognized by his peers and by senior scholars in other fields as an expert in the science of *qirāʾāt*. May Allah have mercy on him and allow us to benefit from him. *Āmīn.*

His Books and Teaching

Beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad Ṣāḥib ﵀ taught at the following institutions in the following cities:

1. Madrasah Ashrafiyyah in Panipat, India. Panipat is about 92 km from Delhi. Qārī Ṣāḥib taught here for 30 years, counting from the age of 12-13 to 43.
2. He taught in various parts of Punjab, Pakistan (Lahore and near Jhelum) for a year or so.
3. Madrasah Ashrafiyyah Fayḍ al-Qurʾān in Shikarpur, Sindh from 1948-1956 for about 9-10 years. Shikarpur is about 35 km from Sukkhur. It is 29km west from the right bank of the Indus River.
4. Dār al-ʿUlūm Nānak Wārā in Karachi, Sindh from 1957-1971.
5. He migrated to *al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah* in 1972 at the age of 68 and taught there for the remainder of his life. He used to sit in the masjid of the Prophet ﷺ from *aṣr* to *ʿishāʾ* daily and would pray every prayer in the masjid as well. He continued doing so even after he had a stroke.

He authored a total of 17 books, totaling 3,376 pages. His books reflect his affectionate nature and his spirituality alongside his level of mastery and scholarship. All his books are in Urdu. Some of them are as follows:

1. *ʿInāyāte Raḥmānī*: An almost 1800-page commentary on the famous poem *Ḥirz al-Amānī wa Wajh al-Tahānī* by Imam al-Shāṭibī ﷺ. This work is encyclopedic in nature and does not seem to have an equal.
2. *ʿUmdat al-Mabānī*: This book serves as an appendix to the book above. It lists those verses of *Ḥirz al-Amānī wa Wajh al-Tahānī* in which the commentators have suggested changes.
3. *Al-Qurrah al-Marḍiyyah*: A commentary on *al-Durrah al-Muḍiyyah* of Imam Ibn al-Jazarī ﷺ.
4. A translation and brief commentary on *al-Wujūh al-Musfirah* of ʿAllāmah al-Mutawallī ﷺ.
5. A translation and brief commentary on *al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyah*.
6. *Tashīl al-Qawāʿid*: A work on the basic and important rules of *Tajwīd*.

7. *Miftāḥ al-Kamāl*: A commentary on the text *Tuḥfat al-Aṭfāl* of Imam Jamzūrī ﷺ.
8. *Ashal al-Mawārid fī Sharḥ ʿAqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣāʾid*: A commentary on the poem *ʿAqīlat Atrāb al-Qaṣāʾid fī ʿIlm al-Rasm al-ʿUthmānī* by Imam al-Shāṭibī ﷺ.
9. *Sirāj al-Ghāyāt fī ʿAdd al-Āyāt*: This work lists all seven verse counts (the first and second verse counts of Madīnah, the Makkī, Baṣrī, Kūfī verse counts, and the verse counts of both Damascus and Ḥimṣ) and where they differ.
10. *Kāshif al-ʿUsr Sharḥ Nāẓimat al-Zuhr*: A commentary on the text *Nāẓimat al-Zuhr* by Imam al-Shāṭibī ﷺ which is on the science of verse enumeration.
11. *Nūrānī Qāʿidah*: Notes were added to this widely used primer to teach beginners to read the Qurʾān. Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ added notes that included important rules of *tajwīd* as well as the best way to teach the primer.

Two of the remaining six works are on *taṣawwuf*, one on the virtues and rulings of Ramadan, one which reorganizes the book *Taʿlīm al-Islām*, one which

lists the subject matter of each *rukūʿ* of the Qurʾān and lastly his parting advice to his students.

His Spiritual Path

In 1352 AH, around the age of 30, Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ became a spiritual student (took *bayʿa*) of Hazrat Mawlāna Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﵀ (d. 1362 AH). He would visit this great scholar and saint with his teacher Qārī Sher Muḥammad ﵀. Upon his spiritual teacher's passing, in 1367 AH, he became the spiritual student of Mawlana Mufti Muḥammad Ḥasan ﵀ (d. 1380 AH) who was a *khalīfah* of Mawlāna Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﵀. In 1378 AH, through this second spiritual teacher, he received permission to take on his own spiritual students. On the passing of Mufti Mawlana Muḥammad Ḥasan ﵀, beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﵀ established a spiritual relationship with the intention of rectifying his inner state with Hazrat Mufti Muḥammad Shafīʿ ʿUsmānī ﵀, even though by this time he had permission to take his own spiritual students. A little before his passing, he established a similar spiritual relationship with Mufti Rashīd Aḥmad Ludhyānwī ﵀. He was ever concerned about his internal state. May we be granted such a concern. *Āmīn.*

His Love for Reciting the Qurʾān

Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﵀ had a deep love for reciting the Qurʾān. If he were not speaking, his tongue would constantly be moving with either recitation of the Qurʾān or the remembrance of Allah. So much so, that even in his sleep, his tongue would be moving. He would work on three *khatams* of the Qurʾān at the same time, one which he was reading during *tahajjud*, one which he would be completing during his daily prayers, and one which he would be completing for the sake of reviewing his memorization. When leading *tarāwīḥ* in Dār al-ʿUlūm Nānak Wārā in Karachi, he would complete seven to ten *ajzāʾ* per night, with *tarāwīḥ* prayers lasting late into the night. He would complete the Qurʾān in one *riwāyah* in three to four nights, and then begin another *khatam* in another *riwāyah*. This way, at the end of Ramadan, he would have completed nine to ten different readings.

Not only was the recitation of the Qurʾān a part of him as if it were a part of his very flesh, but his heart, his intellect, his thoughts, and his reflections all revolved around the Qurʾān. He was constantly

concerned about what were the best ways to teach, spread, and publish works on the Qurʾān.

May Allah *Taʿāla* accept this concern from him and allow us to have the same concern for learning, teaching, and spreading the knowledge of the sciences of the Qurʾān. *Āmīn.*

His Love for Voluntary Worship

Someone who was very close to Qārī Fatḥ Pānīpatī ﷺ asked him that if Allah allowed you to ask for anything at all on the Day of Judgment, what would you ask for? He replied: I would ask for permission to pray in the shade of the throne of Allah.

Beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ once remained in *sujūd* for almost three hours and generally loved to pray voluntary prayers. So occupied with being in the presence of Allah in prayer, he could forget that he had to go somewhere and would just keep praying. He would wake up about two hours before *fajr* and engage in his regular *adhkār*. He completed thousands of *ʿumrahs* in his lifetime, as he would make up to three *ʿumrahs* in one day. He would walk to the area of Masjid ʿĀʾisha to renew his *iḥrām*, and then he would walk back to the *ḥaram* and make another *ʿumrah*. He completed twenty *Ḥajjs* in his life.

Near the end of his life, even with half his body paralyzed due to a stroke, he did not want to stop fasting. Once, Qārī Ṣāḥib's ﷺ wife asked Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani (may Allah protect and preserve him) to advise him to stop fasting, as his condition was very

poor. Hazrat Mufti Taqi Usmani advised him that his condition was such that even obligatory fasts could be delayed and made up, and here Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ was keeping voluntary fasts. He suggested that he stop fasting for a few days so that his weakness could be treated.

Upon hearing this sincere advice, beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ held Hazrat Taqi Usmani's hand and laughed a little, and then held his hand and let it go three times. Then he spoke in the labored way that he could manage, "Based on the apparent condition (*ẓāhir*), what you say is correct, but now the matter has moved beyond this apparent reality." Meaning, that this was some beautiful internal matter between him and His Lord, Most High.

It seems that every moment of his life was spent in some form of worship. He was a true slave of Allah, always remembering Him, Most High. One person writes that the only way one can understand his love for worship is that it was a miracle. It certainly seems so.

His Duʿās

Beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad Ṣāḥib ﷺ was known for his *duʿās*. He would make *duʿā'* for hours at a time. While on a visit to the Ḥaram, he started making *duʿā'* after the *fajr* prayer up to the call to prayer for *ẓuhr*. He then resumed making *duʿā'* and only stopped for *ʿaṣr* and *maghrib*, and then continued making *duʿā'* till *ʿishā'* prayer. He would pleadingly make *duʿā'*, and his *duʿās* were extremely accepted with Allah. People would come from far and wide just to ask Beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ to make *duʿā'* for them.

If anyone asked Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ in a gathering to make *duʿā'*, he would lift his hands and immediately start making *duʿā'* for them. Other people's hands would tire, but strangely Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ hands would never tire. Sometimes, in the middle of *duʿā'*, with a thought for others' fatigue, he would say, "O Allah, make us of those who ask you (make *duʿā'*) often, and do not make us of those that tire from asking you." *Āmīn.*

Mawlānā Muḥammad Yūsuf Ludhyānwī ﷺ writes that he once observed the length of Qārī Ṣāḥib's ﷺ *duʿās* in Minā during Hajj. When he arrived with a group to the first pillar for stoning, he found

beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad 🕋 standing there making *duʿāʾ*. He and his group moved onto the second pillar for stoning, and then the third. Even after his group had completed stoning all three pillars, he could see that Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad 🕋 was still standing at the first pillar making *duʿāʾ*. He writes that had I not seen this myself, it would have been hard to believe such a report.

It is said that his spiritual state was such that those sitting in his company would feel a change in their own spiritual state.

May Allah accept all our *duʿās* for Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad 🕋, elevate his ranks with Him, and make us of those who do not tire from asking Allah for each and every little thing. *Āmīn*. For it is solely by the mercy of Allah that our hearts beat, and our eyes blink without us even thinking of it. Ya Allah!

His Sister, Ḥajjan Allah Dī

Beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ had a sister named Allah Dī (which means given by Allah). She is referred to as Ḥajjan Allah Dī ﷺ in the biography, suggesting that she had made Ḥajj, *Alḥamdulillāh*. I do not know if she was older than Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ or younger. Her love for serving the Qurʾān is described to be at the level of *ʿishq*! She was a patient lady and went through many trials in her life. She was always full of gratitude to Allah and had a very high level of *taqwā* and a deep love for the *walīs* of Allah. Known to be an extremely pious woman, she spent her life teaching and spreading the knowledge of the Qurʾān.

After she and Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ became orphaned as young children, they were placed under the care of a close relative, Chawdhury Muḥammad Ibrāhīm. It was through this relative that she married her first husband, who is described to have had bad character, and this marriage ended in a divorce. She then married Chawdhury Ilāhī Bakhsh Mahālī. On Thursdays, Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ used to walk to her home in Mahali to visit her. Panipat is about 6 km from Mahali as I have been able to estimate.

Chawdhury Ilāhī Bakhsh passed away shortly after the partition of India and Pakistan, and Ḥajjan Allah Dī ﷺ married Ḥājī Ḥāfiẓ Aẓīmullāh. She did not have any children.

May Allah grant dear Ḥajjan Allah Dī the highest level of *jannah* and may all her students be counted as her children and a *ṣadaqah jāriyah* for her. *Āmīn.*

His Family

We had already learned that beloved Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's father passed away when he was six and his mother passed away when he was nine. His blessed mother raised her children by spinning raw cotton into thread on a spinning wheel (*charkhah*). This thread can then be sold and is used by weavers to make blankets and other items.

Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ married for the first time at the age of 30. His first wife's name was Ṭayyibah. She was of a Pathan background, quite different from Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ and her mother Zakiyyah was known to be a very pious woman. In 1935, at the age of 31, he became a father. He named his son Nūr Muḥammad. Unfortunately, his marriage with Ṭayyibah did not last. They divorced, but Nūr Muḥammad remained with Hazrat Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ. Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ later came to think of Ṭayyibah as being like a sister to him and was always very kind and respectful towards her. She did remarry.

Nūr Muḥammad was an intelligent child, but at the age of eight, he passed away, with his last memorization lesson being till the end of Sūrat al-

Ḥijr. The last ayah of his lesson was "Worship your Lord until what is certain comes to you." (15:99)

Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ did not remarry until he was 52 years old. While he had many offers from families of women who had not been married previously, he chose to marry a widow who had a divorced daughter with a young son. This lady, Ṣiddīqah, was known to his students at Amma Jān, (dear mother or beloved mother). Another name I have seen for her is Barī Ustānī jī (the elder female teacher), perhaps because she herself had studied the Qurʾān. She married Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ with the sole intention of taking care of him. Her daughter, Fatima, eventually remarried, and had children with her second husband as well.

Amma Jān Ṣiddīqah ﷺ took great care of Qārī Ṣāḥib ﷺ, especially after he had a stroke, and Allah blessed her with a beautiful sign of acceptance. Someone saw the Prophet ﷺ in a dream in which he ﷺ said to Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ that the hearts of many have been inclined to take care of you and serve you, both in Pakistan and in *al-Madīnah al-Munawwarah*. But make sure your wife is pleased with you before you come (to *al-Madīnah al-Muwwarah*). This can be seen as a sign of acceptance with Allah for

everything that she did to care for Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ. May Allah grant her the highest level of *jannah* and elevate her ranks with Him for every time someone benefits from Qārī Ṣāḥib's ﷺ work. *Āmīn.*

His Parting Advice

Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad ﷺ left some parting advice for those learning and teaching the *qirāʾāt*. He first advised us to dedicate our lives to serving the Qurʾān and that we should be careful not to waste our own time or the time of our students while teaching them the sciences of the Qurʾān. He words it as, "to weigh each moment of precious time and spend it in the service of the Qurʾān."

He advises us to assign all the good that we see in his books to the earlier scholars on whose books he relied. He then asks the readers to assign any errors one may see in his books to him, and inform Qārī Muḥammad Ṭāhir Raḥīmī of them, whom he trusts completely in his knowledge and understanding of the science of *qirāʾāt*.

He lists seven things that are a means for the study of the science of *qirāʾāt* and warns that someone who does not possess them is likely to make mistakes when teaching. They are:

1. The Arabic language
2. *Tajwīd*
3. The science of Qurʾānic Orthography (*Rasm*)
4. *Waqf and Ibtidāʾ*

5. The science of verse enumeration (*ʿIlm al-Fawāṣil*)

6. A *sanad* (chain of transmission).

7. A complete recitation of the Qurʾān from beginning to end (in the *qirāʾāt*).

He also advises teachers to treat students with affection and kindness and to correct their bad habits by advising them kindly. He emphasizes the importance of studying texts with a teacher and advises against trying to gain an understanding of this science by simply reading its books on one's own. Lastly, he writes that one should recite the Qurʾān with *tajwīd* in simple and beautiful tones while trying ones best to beautify one's voice. However, *ghunan* and *mudūd* should never be over-extended as this is a mistake. He also advises against reciting in tunes that mimic musical tunes.

His advice remains relevant to us today. May Allah make it easy for us to follow it. *Āmīn.*

His Death

Beloved Qārī Ṣāḥib ﵀ returned to Allah in the city of the Prophet ﷺ on Thursday, the 18th of Shaʿbān, 1407 AH/April 16th, 1987, at 3:35 a.m. He is buried in al-Baqīʿ by Imam Nāfiʿ and Imam Mālik ﵀. He was 85 years old in lunar years, and 83 years old in solar years. We thank Allah for making Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad who he was, and we find ourselves grateful to Allah that He ﷻ allowed us to learn about his life. May Allah allow us to continue to benefit from his works and his example and may He, Most High, allow us to meet Qārī Ṣāḥib in *jannah. Āmīn.*

Qārī Sher Muḥammad Khān Pānīpatī[8]

He was from Panipat, India and was born in the year 1267 AH. He was a student of Qārī Muḥyī al-Islām al-ʿUthmānī ﵀. His memorization of the seven *qirāʾāt* was extremely strong. He used to teach at Madrasah Ashrafiyyah and spent forty years of his life teaching Qurʾān. Madrasah Ashrafiyyah was known to be an excellent institution. He was a pious person and was a spiritual student of Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ﵀. He passed away at the age of eighty on the seventeenth of Rajab, 1347 AH.

[8] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 2:331.

Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's Sanad

The remainder of this work will explore some of the biographies of the *qurrāʾ* in Qārī Fatḥ Muḥammad's *sanad*. I have only drawn out Qārī Ṣāḥib's *sanad* till Muḥammad al-Baqarī ﵀, as he is the teacher of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Manūfī ﵀, and this is where the Panipati chain of transmission meets the Arab chains, and then from there goes to Ibn al-Jazarī.[9]

Muḥammad al-Baqarī
ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Manūfī al-Azharī
ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Dehlvī
Ghulām Muḥammad Dehlvī
Ghulām Muṣṭafā
Shāh ʿAbd al-Majīd
Karam Allah Muḥaddith Dehlvī
Imām al-Dīn Amrūhī
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī al-Muḥaddith
ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā
Muḥyī al-Islām al-ʿUthmānī
Fatḥ Muḥammad Pānīpatī

[9] Muḥammad al-Baqarī's *sanad* to Ibn al-Jazarī ﵀ can be seen in Esmail, *Tashīl al-Jazariyyah,* 13; Gaibie, *al-Laʾālīʾ al-Naqiyyah*, 15; and in more detail in Thānwī, *Shajarat al-Asātidhah*, 31-46. The names presented in this table are as they are mentioned in *Tadhkirat al-Shaykhayn* and *al-Laʾāliʾ al-Naqiyyah.*

Muḥyī al-Islām al-ʿUthmānī[10]

His name was Abū Muḥammad Muḥyī al-Islām ibn al-Ḥājj Qāḍī Miftāḥ al-Islām al-ʿUthmānī Pānīpatī. His lineage goes back to Sayyidinā ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān ﷺ. He was born in the year 1295 AH in Panipat, India. By the age of fourteen, he had finished his memorization of the Qurʾān with *tajwīd* and had studied the *Shāṭibiyyah* and recited the Qurʾān in the various canonical readings and received *ijāzah* and *sanad* in them.

He then completed his study of the ten *qirāʾāt* and also studied *Ṭayyibah*. He spent his life teaching the Qurʾān and its sciences. Among his teachers, the most famous was Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā Pānīpatī, from whom he transmits both *ʿasharah ṣughrā* and *ʿasharah kubrā*, *al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyah* and other texts. While he was Qārī Fatḥ Pānīpatī's teacher in *qirāʾāt*, he was also Qārī Sher Muḥammad's teacher. Qārī Sher Muḥammad recited the seven *qirāʾāt* to him from the *ṭarīq* of *al-Shāṭibiyyah*.

[10] al-Barmāwī, *Imtāʿ al-Fuḍalāʾ bi-Tarājim al-Qurrāʾ*, 2:385-386.

Shaykh Muḥyī al-Islām wrote three books, *Sharḥ al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿah*, which includes the *uṣūl* and the *furūsh* of the *Shāṭibiyyah* without being a commentary on the poem. He also wrote *Shajarat al-Qirāʾāt al-Sabʿah* and *Aḥwāl Qurrāʾ Pānīpat*.

He passed away at the end of the blessed month of Shaʿbān in the year 1372 AH, which corresponds to April 3rd, 1953. He was 78 years old.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā[11]

His name was ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ḍarīr Khokhar, known as ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā. Born in 1265 AH, he was an intelligent young man, and he was blind. He had a very beautiful character and was extremely humble. He first studied *tajwīd* and memorized the Qurʾān with Qārī Kabīr al-Dīn ﵀[12], after which he began to attend Qārī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī al-Muḥaddith's ﵀ lessons to whom he recited the ten *qirāʾāt* from both *al-Shāṭibiyyah wa al-Durrah* and *Ṭayyibah*.

Whatever he would hear from his teacher, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muḥaddith ﵀, he would memorize immediately. Due to this, his fellow classmates would routinely sit with him after class to understand the parts of the lesson they may have missed or not understood. Two of his classmates did not like the fact that someone from what they viewed was a lower family background than them was being given such attention and recognition by their

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[11] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 2:306-307; al-Barmāwī, *Imtāʿ al-Fuḍalāʾ bi-Tarājim al-Qurrāʾ*, 2:174-175.

[12] Shaykh al-Barmāwī has written his first teacher's name as Qārī Najībullāh.

classmates. So, from time to time, they would complain to their teacher about him. One such complaint and a misunderstanding lead to Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā ﷺ being thrown out of class.

However, because the other students relied on Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān to review the lesson after class, their studies were also affected. The students devised a plan that involved Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ﷺ hiding under the platform on which the teacher used to sit when he taught the class. However, one day, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ﷺ breathed a little too loudly, and he was discovered. Although his teacher did pull him out from under the platform, he also allowed him back in class.

Later upon hearing of an accident that had befallen Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā ﷺ (from which he recovered), his teacher exclaimed that in all these years he had developed this **one** student. Then he said, Ya Allah have you decided to end the study of *qirāʾāt*, suggesting that the death of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ﷺ would be the end of the study of the science of *qirāʾāt* in that area. This is how much his teacher had come to respect and appreciate the student that was once thrown out of class due to a

misunderstanding. Later, his teacher also asked him to teach one of his own sons.

People used to gravitate toward Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā ﷺ due to both his intelligence as well as his humble nature. He used to live with his family in a room on the third floor of the masjid where he led prayers. There was a window that would open towards the masjid courtyard. Students would come from time to time to ask questions and Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Aʿmā ﷺ would sit in this window and answer their queries. He continued to teach in Panipat for quite some time, and then moved to Ambala, India, where he passed away in 1324 AH or 1330 AH. Out of his many students, two of the most prominent were Shaykh Muḥyī al-Islām ʿUthmānī Pānīpatī and Qārī Muḥammad Qiyām al-Dīn Pānīpatī. He also had a female student named Qāriʾah Akbar Begum who recited the seven *qirāʾāt* to him.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Anṣārī al-Muḥaddith[13]

He was from Panipat. His father's name was Qārī Shāh Muḥammad ﵀ who was the son of Qārī Khudā Bakhsh ﵀. He was born in the year 1227 AH in the home of his maternal grandfather, Shaykh Jalāl al-Dīn Kabīr al-Awliyāʾ ﵀ . He traces his lineage back to the *ṣaḥābī* Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī ﵁.

His first teacher was his father, with whom he studied *tajwīd* and memorized the Qurʾān. After which, his father taught him Persian and some Arabic books as well. Upon completing *Hidāyat al-Naḥw*, a book on Arabic grammar, his father began to teach him the seven *qirāʾāt*. He used to visit and attend the gatherings of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Dehlvī ﵀ with his father as well. His father passed away when Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was only thirteen years old. Upon his father's passing, his uncle, who was a teacher for some of the princes, called him to Delhi. Due to the atmosphere in Delhi, Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ﵀ lost some of his inclination towards studying. He would often see his father in his dreams, and his father

[13] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 2:219-226, 2:298.

would appear upset. Then, he saw the Prophet ﷺ in his dream, and the Prophet ﷺ embraced him. After this, he became inclined towards studying again and began to learn from his uncle.

He studied the *qirāʾāt*, reciting the whole Qurʾān in *jamʿ al-jamʿ* and studying the texts of this science lesson by lesson, with Shaykh Imām al-Dīn Amrūhī ؒ. He studied with Shaykh Imām al-Dīn ؒ for a period of two years, during which there were times where he went hungry, but he remained dedicated to gaining knowledge. He studied *ḥadīth* and the other sciences with many other teachers and at various institutions.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ؒ emphasized the importance of women's Islamic education. In addition to having female students who studied the *qirāʾāt* with him, he also made time every Tuesday to answer women's questions. He would visit the homes of his close friends where he would sit behind a curtain and answer the questions of the women that had come that week. He was also a spiritual Shaykh and had female spiritual students as well.

His recitation was clear and precise, and each letter could be heard clearly. He would recite slowly even in *tarawīḥ* and Mawlānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī ؒ,

while praising his recitation, said Shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ﵀ would enunciate words simply. Those that have attained a mastery of this science recite simply. In such a simple manner, that the common person would not even know that this person is a Qārī. Thousands of people would gather to pray behind him in *tarawīḥ*. His voice was not very loud, but even the people far from him would feel as if they were listening to him from close by.

He spent his life and his whole day teaching the *qirāʾāt* and revived the study of the science in his area. He passed away in Panipat in 1314 AH and is buried in his family graveyard. May Allah have mercy on him. *Āmīn.*

Al-Muqrī al-Shaykh Imām al-Dīn Amrūhī[14]

He was from Amroha, India. His father's name was ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Zayn al-Dīn. He was born in the year 1193 AH. He was Shiʿah at first, and then later adopted Sunni beliefs. He was a spiritual student of Shāh Ghulām ʿAli ﵀, and later became his *khalīfah* as well. He followed the Naqshbandī path of *taṣawwuf*. He learned the seven *qirāʾāt* from Mawlānā Karam Allah ﵀. He passed way at the age of 63 in 1256 AH.

[14] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 2:262.

Qārī Karam Allah Muḥaddith Dehlvī[15]

He returned to Islam as an adult and made *taubah* at the hands of Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Muḥaddith Dehlvī ﵀ with whom he then studied *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, and *qirāʾāt*. After that he completed his study of the seven *qirāʾāt* with Qārī ʿAbd al-Majīd ﵀ who was a student of Qārī Ghūlam Muṣṭafā ﵀, who in turn recited to Qārī Ghulām Muḥammad Dehlvī ﵀ who in turn studied from Qārī ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Dehlvī ﵀, who was a student of ʿAbd al-Khāliq Manūfī ﵀. One of his students was Qārī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Muḥaddith ﵀. He was a spiritual student of Shāh Ghulām ʿAlī ﵀ and was a *khalīfah* in the Naqshbandī Mujaddidiyah path of *taṣawwuf*. He traveled to make Ḥajj and on his return he felt regretful about returning to India. He decided to return to the *ḥaramain* and passed away on his way there in 1258 AH.

[15] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 2:262-263.

Shaykh al-Qurrāʾ Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Dehlvī[16]

He is from Delhi, India, and was born in the year 1040 AH. He was the student of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Manūfī al-Azharī al-Maṣrī. He passed away in 1120 AH.

[16] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 2:203; Gaibie, Saleem, *al-Laʾāliʾ al-Naqiyyah*, 18.

Shaykh al-Qurrāʾ ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Manūfī al-Azharī[17]

He studied various Islamic sciences at al-Azhar University in Egypt and was a student of Muḥammad ibn Qāsim ibn Ismāʿīl al-Baqarī (d. 1111) in *qirāʾāt* and *tajwīd*. It is with him that he completed a study of the ten *qirāʾāt* according to *al-Shātibiyyah* and *al-Durrah* as well as *Ṭayyibah*. He had also studied *al-Muqaddimah al-Jazariyyah* and other texts. He traveled to India in the year 1050 AH during the reign of the emperor Shah Jahan who welcomed him wholeheartedly and gave him the title of *Shaykh al-Qurrāʾ* of India. Many benefited from the Shaykh, to the point that the streets of Delhi were filled with the sound of the recitation of the Qurʾān in the mornings. He remained in Delhi till the reign of the emperor Aurangzeb. Among his famous students was Qārī Ḥāfiẓ ʿAbd al-Ghafūr Dehlvī.

Shaykh al-Manūfī brought a handwritten copy of Ibn al-Jazarī's *al-Nashr fī al-Qirāʾāt al-ʿAshr* with him to India that was dated as having been written in 1006

[17] Mirza Bismillah Baig, *Tadhkirah Qāriyāne Hind*, 1:178; al-Barmāwī, *Imtāʿ al-Fuḍalāʾ bi-Tarājim al-Qurrāʾ*, 2:160-161; Thānwī, *Shajarat al-Asātidhah*, 31.

AH. The name of the copyist was Sharīf al-Dīn ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī Aḥmadī. The copyist mentions that he copied this manuscript from the original manuscript of Ibn al-Jazarī ﵀. Colonel Mirza Bismillah Baig (who was still living in 1380 AH) writes that this manuscript is in the Hyderabad State Library. I do not know if this remains true today.

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Completed in the blessed month of Shaʿbān, 1443 AH solely by the mercy of Allah, Most High, with a prayer on the beloved of Allah ﷺ. May Allah unite us, our families, our teachers, and our loved ones with him ﷺ in *jannah. Āmīn.*

اللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ على سيِّدِنَا مُحمّد وعلى آله وصَحبِه وسلّم

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